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SECTION II

HISTORICAL VALUE OF BASATIN-UL-UNS

A RARE LITERARY WORK OF THE EARLY 14TH CENTURY

By

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I

Those who hold that the Sultanate of Delhi was a merely Muslim and a War-State rather than an Indian and a Culture State support their contention by emphasising upon the wars and bloodshed, pillage and sacrilege that came in the wake of the Muslim invasion and domination. They go so far as to say that the Pre-Mughal period from the Indian literary and cultural standpoints was dark and barren for the rulers, nobles, and people of the time cared little for the masses and had no genuine interest in Indian literature, poetry and the arts. According to them, among a people, who were generally fanatical and primarily military, Amir Khusru was the only person who was somewhat interested in things essentially Indian. They ignore the books on Indian medicines[1] and music[2] and a considerable number of poetic compositions in the regional[3] languages by

1. e. g. Māadan-us-Shifā by Miyān Bhowā, the Prime Minister of Sikandar Lodi.
2. See the Pro: of the Waltaire & Delhi Sessions of I. H. C. for the papers of Dr. Nazir Ahmad & Mrs. Nurul Hasan, on the subject on Lahja-i-Sikandar Shahi and GhunYat-ul-Munya. The latter, "pleasures of desire", was composed in C. 776 H. at the instance of Malik Shamsuddin Ibrahim Hasan Abu Raja. It is an exposition of Indian music and its sources were Sangit Ratnakar, Sangit Ratnavali, Sangit Binod, Sangit Mudra, Satanak, Raga Aranav, and the standard work of Bharata.
3. e. g. Abdul Rahmān, Mullah Dāud, Sādhan, Qutban, Manjhan, Abdur, Razzāq Mushtāqi or Rājan, Abdul Quddus Gangohi, or Alkhuddas etc. Jaisi refers to almost half a dozen 'Prem Kathas', written before him by the Muslim poets.

the Muslim poets which have fortunately come down to us. They do not attach any significance to the fact that some Sanskrit works were translated into Persian by the Muslim Scholars at the instance of the Sultans of[4] Delhi and some provincial rulers encouraged the translation of the sacred books of the Hindus. They are perhaps unaware of the Indian words, thoughts and themes which lie scattered in early Persian literatures and the tales and fables which attracted the attention of the early Muslims who gave them a Persian rendering. One may mention a few such works of the Tughlaq period that are still available. 'Tutināma' or the tale of the Parrots is a book containing 52 tales, originally written in the Indian language, which was given a Persian garb, in 730, by Zeauddin Nakhshabi.[5] He was the author of many other works of which one is 'Gulrez' (scattering rose flowers). 'Mufarrih-ul-qulub'[6] (heart-exhilarating) is a Persian translation of Hitopadesh by "Taj Mufti-ul-Mulki" or Tajuddin bin Muinuddin, who wrote it, as he says in a short preamble, by the order of Malik Nasiruddin, the 'Muqti'[7] (fief-holder or military governor) of the 'Shiqq'[8] (a big division of a country) of Bihar". More important from historical and cultural stand-point is 'Basātin-ul-Uns' (flower gardens of affections which, as has been rightly said by Rieu, "is a Hindu tale, written in ornate prose, copiously interspersed with Arabic and Persian verses, by a native of Delhi who was a hereditary servant of the Court (of the Tughlaqs) and secretary to the royal chancery (Diwān-ul-Inshā)". It is this work, particularly the portion dealing with the Tirhut expenditure of the first Tughlaq Sultan, which forms the subject of this paper.

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4. Firoz Tughlaq, Sikander Lodi & Bengal kings and nobles. "Tarjumān-i-Barāhi" a Persian translation of a great Sanskrit work on astronomy by Varahmihir, son of Aditya Sen, was made at the instance of Sultan Firoz Tughlaq by Abdul Aziz Shamsh Baha-i-Nuri. Ms. Ethe. Maulana Izzuddin Khālid Khāni translated an encyclopædic work in Sanskrit discovered in the temple of Jwala Mukhi at the instance of the same Sultan.

5. Led a secluded & religious life in Badaon, where he died in 751—1350.

6. An incomplete copy of the manuscript is before the writer ; another good copy is available in the collections of Raja Sahib of Ramnagar (Champaran). There are other copies in Bombay and London.

7. The Malfuzats of the 14th & 15th century saints of Bihar refer to some Muqtis of Bihar namely, Malik Zainuddin Majdul Mulk, Malik Muizzuddin Ghori, Malik Abdul Rahman,. Amirs and Walis, perhaps higher in status than Muqtis, have been mentioned in early Chronicles.

8. Moreland says 'My impression is that during the 14th Century, the word 'Shiqq' was coming into use as a synonym for the terms which I have rendered province. This is contested by Quraishi.

The rotograph of what Rieu claims to be the only manuscript of this work which is available in British Museum was procured for the Jayaswal Research Institute of Patna. It consists of 180 plates, each of two original pages and was written in 1074, in good Nastāliq and Naskh character, with 17 lines to a page. But in a Moscow Persian Monthly Journal "Rahnumā-i-kitāb", in its issue of Farwardin, 1340, Iraj Afshār has given us a valuable information about an older copy of Basātin-ul-uns by 'Ikhtisān-ul-Hindi' whose transcription was finished by Qawām-bin Mohammad-al Māzindarāni, on 27th Zilhijja, 836, in Herat. It belongs to the Institute of the Peoples of Asia, 2 Armenesky Street, Moscow, USSR.

Very little is known about the author except what he says about himself in the introductory portion of his work. He names himself as Muhammad Sadr Ulā Ahmad Hasan Dabir-i-Idusi, entitled as Tāj, and well known as Ikhtisān—Taqi-Kāshāni, the author of the well known and voluminous biographical dictionary of poets, Khulāsat-ul-Ashaār, describes him as Mohammad bin Alāuddin Ahmad bin Hasan Idusi Surnamed as Tāj and commonly called Ikhtisān-ud-Dehlawi. The 14 verses of one of his Ghazals which we find in this Tazkira do not contain his poetical penname, and its'Matla' or the first couplet is as follows:- "Ze Daur-i-In Falak-i-Shisha Rang Ahl-i-Hunar—Hami Khorand Cho Sāghar Madaām Khun-i-Jigar" (through the vicissitudes of this glazed or Mirror-like firmament men of skill and ingenuity are ever draining the cup of life or goblets of wine i. e. are working themselves to death). There is no biographical notice of the poet.

There is an interesting reference to "Ikhtisān Dabir" in Siyar-ul-Auliā. Its author, Amir Khurd Kirmāni, while giving an account of the meeting of Maulana Fakhruddin Zarrādi with Sultan Mohammad Tughlaq and of the services rendered by the pious '"Qutbuddin Dabir" in saving the Maulana, his teacher and one of the chief desciples of his spiritual guides, Hazrat Nizāmuddin Auliā, from the wrath of the capricious Sultan tells us something that is not complimentary to the author of the Basātin-ul-uns. When ever some unfortunate people (Badbakhtān) like Ikhtisān Dabir and others similarly-minded men, with a view to giving annoyance to "Sheikh Qutbuddin Dabir" made presumptuous and impudent remarks about Sultan-ul-Mashāikh (Nizāmuddin Auliā) he fearlessly contested their contention and gave severe retorts[9] against them in the presence of

9. It is worth while to consider here the question of the religious persuation of our young author. He appears to have had a strain of free thinking like Sultan Mohammad Tughlaq, who had patronised him since his child-hood (Unfowān-i-

the Sultan, and being goaded by further insinuations and implied threats he said that he would prefer being put to death and to die as a martyr for the sake of Shaikh-ul-Mashaikh so that he might soon attain nearness to him and be relieved of their shameless company".

There is yet another though an indefinte and uncertain reference to the book and its author. Strangely enough, Farishta while mentioning those who were recipients of special favours from the first of the Tughlaqs tells us of one "Malik Ikhtiyāruddin, the author of Basātin-ul-uns[10] on whom was conferred the 'Mansab' (office) of 'Dabiri' (Secretaryship)". The historian says that he made an abridged version of his book. The time and the office tally but the name Ikhtisān is different from Ikhtiyāruddin. The Basātin before us is a book of tales of the kings of Ujjain, Kashmir, Qannauj and China, and particularly of king kishwargir of Kalyan and Queen Mulk Ārāi of Sarandip.[11] Did the historian in his adolescent period feel so attracted towards it as to abridge it ? Of course, the eye-witness account in it of the Tirhut expedition of the Tughlaq Sultan was

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Sabi) and whom he eulogises in a long laudatory ode which fetched him a reward of 60,000 Dinar-i-Mohammadi. One of the 40 couplets of this 'Qasida' is as follows :—"Ze fazl-i-Haq Tu Hama Cheez Dar Jahān Dāri—Magar Do Cheez Ya-ke Aib Wa Ān Doum Hamtā" (through the grace of God you possess everything in this world—except two things one being fault or defect and the other a match or an equal) Eleswhere he says about the Sultan "Khurshaid-i-Din-i-Jāfri Az Maāh-i-Alam-i-Mansurash Tābān" (the sun of the Jāfri faith is resplendent through the moon of his victorious standard). The use of the expression, especially Din-i-Jafri arrests one's attention, Though there is pun on Jāfar and Mansoor which was the name of an Abbasid Khalifa, the founder of Baghdad, Din-i-Jāfri was an expression which arose about the same time when the four schools of, Orthodox Sunni Juris-prudence came into being and it was first used by the new adherents of Imam Musa Kazim, the son and successor of Imam Jafar-a-Sādiq. It is significant that Ikhtisān, after praising God and the Prophet and the latter's Āal-o-Aulād-i-Karām (venerable progency and descendants) stops and nowhere mentions the Ashāb or the companians of the Prophet which all the orthodox Sunnis do. The shiites must have had a breathing time under Sultan Mohammad Tughlaq, who though orthodox, was very liberal in his attitude towards people of the other faiths.

10. Briggs had omitted this in his translation.

11. Our "Shahr-i-Bihar also comes in the picture. The king of Ujjain was very fond of good flowers. When a gardener (Bāghbān) presented a very fragrant and sweet red rose "Gul-i-Lāl Rung", he was asked to search out a special type of young plant of rose, the gaze where at by the inward eyes might lead to the birth of a son (here Ummid is used in the Hindi sense of pregnancy). The gardener wandered about and after covering many plains, hills and deserts reached "Shah-i-Bihar" of extremely pleasant climate and found there such a plant. The sapling was brought and presented to the king who planted it in his garden and had the desired result.

well worth his attention. But Farishta has given much more than we find in this work where the account is literary rather than factual. Farishta's account is largely based on Isāmi's Futuhus Salātin which he mentions and which was completed seven or eight years before Barni's book. The author of the Basātin was in the suite of the Tughlaq Sultan in his eastern expedition. He says that the overwhelming heat and the hardships which he had to endure on his return journey led to such a prolonged (for about a year) and severe illness that his life was despaired. He was, however, saved by the salubrious climate of his birth place, Delhi, and specially by the remarkable skill of the great physician, Muhammad Khujandi. It was during his convalescence that this Indian tale, in a plain language, was brought to him for his amusement and he accepted the request of his friends to put it in an elegant Persian prose. He completed it in 726 when he was only 26 years old. It was to serve as a prelude to a more serious work which he contemplated to write.

On folio 23 Ikhtisān writes "The compilation of a book containing an account of kingly affairs of war and peace is the promised purpose and the main objective in view". He adds "If God so wills the promised compilation would take shape with the felicitous patronage and support of His Majesty". Elsewhere, on folio 26 a, he writes that his numerous professional occupations such as the putting in order of the drafts of official documents, royal mandates and letters patent which was the concern of the "Diwān-ul-Inshā," gathering the light of knowledge and learning from the illuminating lamp of the wise 'Ulamas' (scholars) of the age and also attending on, and rendering service to, His Exalted Majesty did not permit him to undertake the compilation or composition of a big and voluminous book. He thought it advisable to try his hands first with a compilation like the present one and when his style and diction received the approbation of the perfectly eloquent ones and those who were masters of subtileties, he would take up the work dealing with the illustrious actions and glorious deeds of kings and detailing the affairs of war and peace and the description of the great kingly victories.

That the young author of 'Basātin-ul-Uns' was a man of deep learning and a literary genius will have to be conceded. He was well versed in the Quranic texts and the classical[12] works and had an artistic

12. Ikhtisan was impressed, as he writes, by Abu Alā-al-Maarri (973=1058 A. D.), one of the most prominent figures of Arabic literature, a genuine philospher, a gifted free thinker, and a great writer of the Abassid period. He describes him as "Sāhib-i-Shariyat-i-Afāzil Wa Peshwā-i-Sipāh Amāsil" and he invokes the mercy of God for his soul.

mastery on the languages, Persian and Arabic. One of his many 'Qasidas' or panegyrical odes brought him a reward of 60,000 'Dinār-i-Mohmmadi' from Muhammad Tughlaq. His florid expressions, rhetorical flourishes, subtle ingenuities, profuse use of figures of speech, similies and metaphors, though original and striking, form a tiresome reading. Spontaneity, simplicity and purity of diction appear to be giving way to a tendency towards laboured and artificial devices, apparently far-fetched comparisons, and pompous array of words. But when closely examined many of the words and expressions of Ikhtisān will be found to be pregnant with meanings. It would suffice to draw the reader's attention only to folio 12 where the author writes about Hari Singh Deva refusing to listen to reason and fleeing to, and taking refuge in, the hills. Our author says, among other things, that "Manind-i-Āatish dar sang Mukhtafi shud" (like a fire he became hidden in the stone). It is not a mere 'Chakmak' (flint) but the latent danger from the Raja which has also been referred to here. At any rate as a characteristic specimen of prose and poetic composition of the Tughlaq period, the Basātin has a place in the history of Persian literature produced in India.

The Basātin is not deviod of things of cultural and historical interest. References to paintings (Naqqāshi and life-like representations and portraiture of men and animals, music (Nagma wa Mausiqi), numerous musical instruments[13] and their use, the games of polo and chess, festivities and festivals, the various types of fragrant flowers and perfumes, grown and in use at the time, wearing stuffs,[14] brocades, Silk and satin clothes of gold and silver and other rich apparels, and to hospitals (Dār-us-Shifā) etc. cannot but arrest one's attention. The expert (Māhir) painter ('Surat garān' 'Naqqāsh' or 'Nagshguzārān') of Ceylone (Sarandip) were sent to different countries. We are told that they were called upon not only to draw the exact representation of high and mighty ones but were also commissioned with the task of spying and collecting infor-

13. Unfortunately, Chang, Rabab, Nay, Daff, Jalajal etc. of which we find very fine poetic and also realistic description in the book here and there were more foreign than Indian. Ikhtisān, who felt proud of being born as an Indian & who wrote an Indian tale and also refers to "Hukamo-i-Hind", gives us such names as Gul-o-Zār, Ruh Afzā, Samanbar, Mulk Arāi & Kishwargir for his heroines and heroes. But he speaks of the 7 headed 'Devas' also and makes mention of 'Ud-i-Hindi' Abeer etc. which were exclusively Indian.

14. e. g. Sundus (silk wrought with gold and silver), Istabraq (silken cloth whose colour seems to change agreeably to the light, it is seen in), Debā (brocade, cloth of gold), Atlas, (satin of high quality), and other clothes of veriegated colours. Qāqam and Sanjāb which are varieties of ermine and other kinds of clothes have also been mentioned.

mation, specially of military nature. There is a significant reference to some manners and customs of the time. On the 10th of Muharram, or 'Āshur' day, people celebrated the mourning anniversary of the martyred grandson of the Prophet by throwing black dust on their heads and putting on robe of lamentations on the body. The whole night of the 15th Shaban, called 'Shab-i-Barāt', was passed without a wink of sleep in prayers, all the time expecting a response from God. There are references to the 'Ijāb' (affirmation) and 'Jalwa'[15] (bridalbed) ceremonies and bridalfeasts after, the 'Nikah', and 'Siyum' or the three-days' mourning ceremony, which were observed then as now. We also find mention being made of the celebration of the two 'Ids'. Ikhitasān's mention of "Jāma-i-Kāghzi" (garment of paper) and 'Pairāhan-i-Kāghzi (a long robe or vest of paper) worn by Mutazallimān (Oppressed complainants who sued for justice), reminds us of the first line of the Urdu 'Diwān' of Ghālib :—

"Naqsh faryādi hai kiski shokhiye tahrir kā-
Kāghzi hai pairhan har paikar-i-Tasvir kā".

Standing on one leg was considered as a reverential attitude. The 'Zamin-bos' or prostration on, and kissing of, the ground was practised before the kings and rulers. People were superstitious. They were afraid of 'Asibi-chashm' (fatal accident in consequence of witchcraft), believed in demons and spirits and in 'Sāad-o-Nahs' (lucky or unlucky hours). They wore charms and amulets (Tāwiz or Hirz) on their necks and arms for averting calamities. Perhaps more important for us are the references to such offices and officials, as 'Diwān-ul-Mustaufi', Diwān-ul-Inshā, Diwān-ul-Qazā, 'Dabir-i-Shahna', 'Sar-Lashkar' 'Vizir', 'Hājib', 'Khāzin-i-Khās', 'Qāzi-i-Adl', 'Hākim', 'Nadim', and 'Amaldārān-i-Mamālik',[16] 'Muqaddamān'.

15. On the occasion of the first meeting of the bride and bridegroom in the presence of the relatives and others, mainly women, on a raised platform the holy Quran and a mirror are placed in front of the pair sitting side by side. When the 16th century Chisti Saint; Hazrat Abdul Quddus Gangohi, was placed in such a situation and the women began to chant the Hindi song "Ghunghat Re Khol Dhania Shah Dekhe re Torey-Is Ghonghat re Karane Shah Bāinh Maroray". He was so lost to himself in ecstacy that he fell down from the "Takht-i-Arusi" or the bridal throne (Latāif-i-e Quddusiya).

16. Whenever the auther has to write about such figures in the story as kings, Wazirs and Princes, he makes interesting observations containing maxims and principles of Government and rules of conduct for the rulers who have been described as "Zil-lal-Lah" or the shadow of God entrusted with the protection of the weak against the strong. Ikhtisān has told us how the rulers were to behave themselves towards their subjects with out any extraneous considerations, and how they had to devote themselves to the affairs of the

The chief value of the book lies, however, in what one gets in it about Ghiyāsuddin Tughlaq and his Tirhut expedition. Neither Barani nor Yahya Sirhindi tells us of the Tirhut affair. Our earliest authority for this purpose is Isāmi, whose book 'Futuh-us-Salātin', had been consulted by Farishta. Mullah Taqia[17] gives more information. But Ikhtisān was an eye-witness and a participant in the events. Though he writes in general terms and in a highly ornate and verbose style, there is much in his account which may be taken as a supplement to, and a corrective of, the versions of the 16th century writers.

Elliot has left out much of what Barani says about the character and government of the first Tughlaq. Ikhtisān's eulogy of Majlis-i-Ālee, the great world-subduing lord, the virtuous Sultan, the warrior-martyr, defender of the Hejāzi faith, Ghiyāsud duniya waddin Abul Muzaffar Tughlaq Shah is also expressed in general terms but is, however, not devoid of interest for the one corroborates the well-deserved enlogium of Barani and others. He pours forth his encomium on 'the Sultan's perfect sense of fairness and justice, his might and majesty, his lion-like valour and intrepidity, his liberality and munificence which was open to all alike, and his readiness to help and protect the weak against the strong. By reason of his firm and correct decisions in matters of administration he had attained the rank of a 'Mujtahid'[18] (doctor of law) and his opinion in solving the problems of kingship and government and his thoughts and conceptions had become the principles and mottos of

Government and Administration so as to mete out justice and equity and inflict punishment on the wrong doers, over throw tyranny and oppression, establish peace and order, practise economy, promote the cause of religion, according to the Shariyat and the sunan (traditions) of the Prophet and do everything for the good of the state and the wellbeing of the people. Ethical principles and moral precepts have also been inculcated through the months of those who figure in the story.

17. Mulla Taqia Shustari "one of the learned scholars of established deputation of the age" and entitled Muarrikh Khan by emperor Jahangir, came to India, according to Taqi Kāshāni (Khulāsatul Ash-āar), in 994 and died in 1025. He has been mentioned by Abul Fazl and others and was one of the few nobles, who had accepted Din-i-Ilahi cult of Akbar. He undertook a tour over the North-eastern provinces of India and consulted the books in the libraries of Bihar and Gaur in Bengal on the basis of which he compiled his famous Diary. Unfortunately only a portion of this work was copied out by Maulvi Ilyas Rahmani of Darbhanga, now deceased, and the manuscript was lost. See Maāsir, the Patna Urdu Journal, for Mulla's historical account of Tirhut and Darbhanga.

18. Amir Khusru has also poured forth his eulogium on the wise just and accomplished founder of the Tughlaq Dynasty and has described him as "wearing a hundred doctor's hood under his crown".

the world-taking rulers. He had set his heart firmly on the path laid down by pious and saintly personages, and even in the midst of the crowded occupation of royalty, he never for a moment neglected the observance of the rules and ordinances of the Shariat. He always gave preference to his religious obligations over his worldly functions. Such was the king of manifold virtues who after effecting the conquest of the kingdoms of Lakhnauti and Sonargaon and the neighbouring regions of land and sea, hills and plains, and taking immense booty in the shape of treasures, huge elephants, and swift-moving horses, and making two crowned kings his captive and protege, turned the reins of his determination towards the subjugation and possession of the vast and far-flung and abandantly pleasant realm of Tirhut.[19]

"Thus the conquest of Bengal preceded and did not follow that of Tirhut as Dr. K. R. Qanungo[20] would have us believe. As regards the two kings, "Sāhib-i-Afsar wa Kulāh" (crowned head), Isāmi, the author of Futuh-u-Salātin,[21] also says "Do Shāhash Badast Āmda Bedirang Yake Az Rahe Sulh Wa Digar Bajung". (Two kings came under his control without delay—one through peace and the other through war). These were two brothers, Nasiruddin Ibrāhim, and Ghiyāsuddin Bahādur alias Bhura, sons of Shamsuddin Firuz of Bengal. The former, according to Isāmi, met the Sultan when he had passed out of Awadh and had crossed the Gumti (Kosi ?) early in the 4th year of his accession. He offered his submission and was sent with prince Bahrām, Zulchi, Tātār Khan, and others, against Bahadur. Bhura offered spirited resistance, was defeated, and fled, but was captured while fleeing with his beautiful slave girl. Then the Sultan, says Isāmi, led his forces against the Rai (Raja) of Tirhut (Hari Singh Deo, son of Sakti Singh) and the sixth and the last ruler of the Karnat[22] dynasty of Simrāon) who was so

19. Basātin-ul-Uns.

20. History of Bengal volume 2.

21. Called by its editor, Dr. Mahdi Hasan. "The Shāhnāma of Madiaeval India" Text Pub hed by Education Press Agra, 1938, see pp. 402-406.

22. The founder of the last independant Hindu dynasty of north-eastern India was Nanya deva who came from Karnatak in Southern India and established his strong hold at Simrāon Garh, then in Mithila in 1097 A. D. He was followed by Ganga Deva, Narsingh Deva, Ramsingh Deva (a comtemporary of Dharm Swami, the Nepalese Buddhist pilgrim), Shakti or Sakra Singh deva and Hari Singh deva. According to the local traditions Hari Singh deva, the last ruler of the Simrāon Dynasty invited the wrath of the Sultan of Delhi because of his secret intrigues and collusive alliance with Bahadur Shah Bhura of East Bengal and that when he was vanquished by Sultan Ghyasuddin in 1324 he managed

overpowered and struck with fear that he decided to beat a retreat without putting up a fight "Nadāda Masāfe Hazimat Namud". The Hindus took refuge in a dense wood and in an impenetrable jungle of trees. Inspired by tne Sultan who with a hatchet in hands, cut down one or two old trees, his soldiers soon wiped out the jungle, and on the third day delivered the assault on the fort which had lofty walls and was surrounded by seven[23] deep ditches, full of water. After taking the fort by storm, the Sultan stayed there for two or three weeks and sent his troops right and left to attack, disperse and kill the Hindus whereever they assembled in large numbers, and seized their properties. Thus the whole land was overrun. Acting on the traditions of Mustafa (Prophet Mohammad) the Sultan gave royal umbrella to one (Nasiruddin) and then sent him to his country and kingdom (Lakhnauti), and the pious Ahmad, son of the warrior, Tabligha (Nagori), was left in charge of Tirhut. After passing one or two months, the Sultan moved back towards his capital. Isāmi does not give the name of the Raja, nor does he say anything about his fate and further moves. Farishta and Mulla Taqia say that he was taken captive, but they are rightly contradicted by local tradition and also by the eyewitness, Ikhtisān, the author of Basātin-ul-Uns.

The account of the Tirhut expedition on folios 11 A—13 A of Basātin-ul uns is as follows......The subduer of regions whose inherent virtues of true understanding and sound judgment, enabled him to study and realise from the beginning the detailed intricacies of arduous affairs and on whose tablet of to-day the accidents and occurrences of the future left a deep impression, (who foresaw the future happenings) decided to pro-

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to escape to Bhatgaon in Nepal where he established a new line of rulers consisting of himself and his three successors.

23. Mr. B. H. Hodson, Resident in Nepal, paid a visit to the ruins of Simrāon and published his observations in Asiatic Journal volume 4, 1835. He saw a dense jungle about 12 miles in circumference, situated to the east of Jamuni Nadi and the west of Kachorwa. He writes : —"It is barely 500 years since Simrāun was a Pakka, fortified city, the pride and the defence of Mithila.—I traced the northern wall in all its extent ; measured the dimensions of the great Pokhra or reservoir called Isra ; and clambered to the top of what were once the citadel and the 'Rani-bās' or Mahal Sarai. From the communications of an intelligent Brahman of Bhagwanpur, I gathered that the form of the city is a parallelogram, surrounded by an outer and an inner wall, the former of unburnt, the latter of burnt, bricks—the one having a compass of seven cos, and the other, of about five cos. On the eastern side, six or seven wet ditches may still be traced outside the pakka wall, and three or four on the western side. ......The kingdom of the Deva dynasty in the plains expired with the destruction or desertion of Simrāun. It extended from Kosi to the Gandak, and from the Ganges to the

claim the truth of the faith and promulgate the ordinances and the verified traditions of the Prophet in that land of infidelity and errors. The Rai (Raja) of that place, on account of his abundant resources, numerical superiority, strength of his fort, and the power of his personality never took the cap of pride and arrogance off his head and had sharpened the sword of his refractoriness and sedition. He was accustomed to behave perversely like Khatt-i-Tarsā (writing from left to right) towards the preceding rulers and like pen had never shown an inclination to accept his subjection and offer his submission. But immediately on the receipt of the news of the arrival of the victorious standard, he was so greatly awe-struck at the dread of the triumphant army that tremor arose all over his body like that which happens to the sheet of the tents. He felt twisted and entangled like the tent-rope and like the tent-pin his tongue became transfixed within the teeth of his anguish. Like the pavilion of the Turkman, the bright world became dark and gloomy in his eyes. The forces of fear and dread delivered such an assault on the centre of his heart that all the threads of planning and deliberation fell off from his hands of business-transacting wisdom. Within the walls of that very fortress whose lofty towers had been deemed by him to be an emblem of the rising sun of his felicity and fortune and the star of his honour and dignity, he had to set up a public mourning for the loss of his prosperity and territory. Realizing that any further stay there would be the sure occasion of his journey towards the depth of the hell, he set his heart on a precipitate flight. In that condition he beat the drum of departure and put the saddle on the back of his swift moving flying horses. In short, he rode away (verse Arabic). He who in the morning was a great sovereign, became a contemptible beggar in the evening (verse Persian). He leapt up and fell down with a pale face from the fear of the blue sword, just as the spring leaves fall off because of the sting of the autumn wind.

The freak of his fortune, we are further told, covered the eyes of his wisdom[24] and prudence and prevented him from seeing the lovely countenance of a happier issue. On seeing the dust raised by the horses of the army of Islam, his eyes of circumspection and foresight became covered with the storm of affliction. The bad presage of fortune threw the star of his prosperity in the lowest extremity of adversity

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hills of Nepal ; at least, such were its limits in the days of its greatest splendour". pp. 121 to 124.

24. The rhetorical observation "Shaqāwat-Bakht-i-chashm-i-Khirad-i-u-az-Laqā-i-Marghub-i-Sawāb Be-poshānid". Suggests that the Sultan would have been prepared to accomodate the Rajah, but the latter being at first over-confident of

and he chose the hills as a place of refuge and asylum. From the frigidity emitted by the clouds and the awe of the sun of the sphere of bravery and valour he became a shadow without a substance. Pale-faced and restless like the falling leaves and trembling like willows, he recited the verses of flight. In the hope of attaining freedom or deliverence, he caught hold of the skirt or declivity of the mountain and taking his abode in the central belt thereof (Kamar-i-Koh) he concealed himself like fire in stone.

After a few days the royal pavilion was set up within the sanctuary (court) of that big city while the state camps were pitched on the outskirts of that capital town. His Majesty stayed there for a considerable time for looking after the administrative affairs, apportioning duties and offices and making arrangements for the various 'Iqtas' (division) of that land. The group of idolators and unbelievers, who relying on the densely-wooded Jungles, numerous and large thorny forest, deep waterful ditches resembling the sea, and strong fortification and impregnable citadels, had gathered like pearls hidden in the shell were sent by the stroke of the Hindi swords like Pharoah to the depth of the hell. "Summ-i-Zabarjadi" or the emarald-like[25] hoofs of the horses of the tumultuous army (raging and agitating like the waves of the sea) became Yāqut-i-Rummāni (a precious kind of ruby). On the other hand, he showered the rains of his justice and generosity on that band of headmen of the villages (Muqaddamān)[26] and on all those inhabitants of that realm who made the 'farmāns' (orders) issued by him their necklace and their ear-rings. They were favoured with more lands and soldiery than they had before. When the tangled mass of affairs was disposed off or settled, as he desired and his heart, endowed with sincerity, became free from the cares of establishing rules and principles (of government) on a firm and stable basis and his auspicious mind was at rest regarding the regulation and control of the borders and environs of that region...he triumphantly wended his way back to the Imperial Capital.

II

We do not know about the original of "Hindi tale of king Keshwargir" the contents whereof were very pleasing but whose existing

his power and resources and of his safe and secure position was not amenable to reason.

25. This suggests that the Raja was forced to fight the Imperialists and there was much blood-shed after which he managed to escape to the hills.

26. By "Tāifa-i-Mukaddamān and Sāyar-i-Mutamanninān" obviously the author meant the Indians, natives of Tirhut.

"translation" did not commend itself to Ikhtisān's literary taste because of which, at the instance of his friends, he undertook to give it a more acceptable and ornate garb. One concerned with the literary analysis of Basātin-ul-Uns will find it difficult to sort out the Indian contributions amidst the overwhelming Persian and Arabic elements. The Chief Dramatic Personage, men and women, bear Irānianized Muslim names and their royal fathers as well as the Wazirs and the Wise devoutly ascetics (Zāhids) who figure so frequently and prominently in the series of stories, put one after the other, remain unnamed. It is only seldom that the stories descend from the level of Kings, princes, and ministers to the representatives of the middle and the lower classes with the only exception of Zāhids and the Ministrels. Of course one comes across the Bāghbān (gardener) who after a good deal of search in different directions found for the king of Ujjain the much covated "Nehāl-i-Gul" (sapling of the rose plant) in "Shahr-i-Bihar", noted for "its salubrious climate and fertile soil possessing great power of growth (Quawat-i-Nāmia)". There are references to the Saiyyād (fowler) and to Māh Paikar, the songstress and dancer. Minor episodes have been assigned to birds like crow, parrot (Tuti), ring-dove (Qumri), to animals and reptiles like dear, and to the king of the serpents (Shāh-i-Marān), and also to jins and spirits. In the geographical background one finds mention being made of Kashmir, Ujjain, Qannauj in the north, and Paithān or Kaiyān and Sarandip in the South. China and Rum and Paras (Persia) also come in the picture. There is very little essentially Indian in the narratives and in the scenic dramatic elements, and the religious background appears to be wholly Islamic.

Like other Belles-lettres of the kind the stories of Basātin follow the classical pattern. The element of love is the most important in it as elsewhere. We get instances of love at first sight and a noticeable case is that of the son of the Wazir of Rum and the daughter of a Zāhid whose forms were changed into those of a 'Bulbul' and a 'Gul' respectively by the curse of the ascetic but who were restored to their human form by the king of Ujjain through the use of a prayer engraved on a magical signet ring. The infatuation of Kishwargir for Mulk-Arāi of Sarandip commenced with the dazzling splendour of her sight in a dream. It is in a dream that the king of Ujjain saw a wise ascetic figure an exact counterpart of whom was discovered by the king's 'Hājib' (Chamberlain) in a certain cloister[27] of the recluses. Adventurous travels and seafaring

27. The Sauma, a or the hermitage was full of devotees, practising abstinence and austerities, and attempting to control their egos and, evil passions.

voyages, shipwreck tragedy, travels in disguise as merchants—all in quest of the beloved one—have been mentioned. That man is a plaything of chance has found illustration in the case of two sisters, Gul-Ozār and Mulk-Ārai, both daughters of the king of China, vanquished by the ruler of Sarandip. While the former was persecuted and pursued by fate the latter because of an astronomical influences became the accomplished queen of Sarandip and both were eventually united. A case of marriage as a result of mutual love without the consent of the parents, separation and consequent pangs, and eventual reunion is that of Samanbar. Ruh Afzā, the afflicted wife of the king of Kashmir, is a model of fidelity and chastity and so is the case with Samanbar and Mulk Ārai. Stress is laid on the chastity of women and the villainous and treacherous conduct of the king of Qannuaj and the Wazir are exposed and condemned. The former receives his deserved punishment for his sinister motives and the vain attempts to seduce the wedded wife of the prince of Pāras who was treacherously drowned. As in other popular tales and fables there is much in Basātin of what may be called fantastic, specially matters pertaining to magic and miracles. A certain Hakim (philosopher) taught a king the art of assuming any form at any time and this led to troubles.

Apart from the characters and the episodes echoing their feelings and attitudes, the other characteristic points that attract our attention include reflexions and discourses attributed to wise and learned wazirs and Zāhids and incidental indications of life and thought and of the atmosphere of gaiety and joy of the time which the contemporary 14th Century literary work belongs. The purely literary and artistic problems may be left to those who are competent to handle them. But a student of history is naturally interested in prying into its pages to see if there is any thing in them on which to base his conclusions about the conception of the age and regarding certain aspects of the society of the time.

Let us first see what Ikhtisān puts into the mouth of a Zāhid about the criterian of a good story of which the king of Ujjain is said to have been very fond. He categorised the "strange or unique (Gharib)" stories into three kinds; those which are all about ease and happiness; those which have nothing but disquititude and affictions; and those which are in between the two. The third is preferable for an account of repose and tranquillity is devoid of the advantages of experience and good counsels and that of mere pains and troubles is conducive to mental care, excessive griefs, and physical emaciation. But the narrative of troubles which lead to ease and comfort should be more satisfying and acceptable for there can be no adequate appreciation of the worth and

value of ease and affluence without under going and experiencing hardships and troubles.

III

More important than this is the glimpse we get about the contemporary political ideas and ideals of morality for kings and rulers and principles of good government, justice, diplomacy and statesmanship which find expression here and there in the book. In a long discourse the wazir of the king of Pāras who was about to embark on a revengeful expedition against the king of Qannauj for his treacherous behaviour towards his heir apparent advised restraint and resort to diplomacy before the use of the sword. After dilating on the transitoriness of life and the need of doing good deeds in this world in accordance with the canons of religion for recompense in the next, he observed—"Today God the Glorious has placed from his treasure of "I give to whomsoever I like" the sunlike crown on your auspicious head and has made the solomon's throne firm and stable for you. He has cast and spread His limitless favours through your perfect sense of fairness, justice and equity, on His creatures. The sultan is the shadow of God on earth and he is the protector of all the week and the oppressed ones. It is through your personality of angelic virtues that He has removed the occasions of disputes, griefs and struggles, the fear of loss and life and property, bloodshed, and equation of lawful and unlawful things. Verses :—Now the world expects from you that you will keep them under the skirt of your justice. If the sphere (fortune) goes against them it is your duty to face and dispel it and if the time oppresses them you should not leave and neglect them".

Here is an indication of the possibly prevalent doctrine of royal divinity. There are other references to the theory that the king was representative of God on earth, and emphasis is laid here and elsewhere on the principles of good government, justice and righteousness. In this very discourse the wazir said further that he could very well understand the feeling of his master at the news of the death of his son by the fraud and subterfuge of the king of Qannauj, but it was not advisable and just to involve a multitude of people in ruin and destruction for the sake of one person......He added, "A king should so behave that widows, overwhelmed in grief, who breath deep sighs at dawn, and whose heart has been roasted on the fire of sorrows and distress, and the afflictions-enduring orphans with the flood of blood flowing through their pair of eyes, whose house of expectation has been ruined by adversity, should, by the vigilant watchful pair of pupils of the royal eyes, enjoy sound and comfortable sleep.

Elsewhere (p. 70), the wazir of the king of Kalyan who was preparing himself for a war against the king of Sarandip gave some pieces of advice to his royal master, and among other things, he observed as follows :—A king ought to be endowed and adorned with the excellences of sound judgement, clear and enlightened conscience and attributes of enemy-over throwing and army-shattering bravery and intrepidity so that the gaining of advantages and averting of harm might be made easy with the help of his problem-solving judgement. He should not draw out his sword from the scabbard so long as there was a possibility of gaining his objects, general and particular, with the help of his sword-like tongue. If he did so the fame of his excellent sagacity, and great diplomatic skill would be noised abroad and the talk about his admirable statesmanship would be on the tongues of all and sundry. The faithful and sincere servants of the state in performing their duties would keep before their eyes his actions and examples as their guide and motto. All men of wisdom and experiences have always stressed the priority of sound judgement over the use of sword. Excellent management and sound policy have been preferred to rackless bravery.

When the wicked king of Kannauj was captured and interrogated he admitted his guilt and showed great humility. The wazir of the victorious king advised the latter to intern the captive and issue final orders after due deliberation over this matter. He observed on this occasion as follows :—In finalising the transactions, big or small, and issuing orders regarding matters pertaining to life and property no virtue should be regarded as better than due consideration of the affairs separately and doing things after due deliberation. Verses (Arabic) :—Some works are performed with an eye on the subsequent effects for sometimes faults occur as a result of things done hurriedly. Hurry or haste is satanic while delay or deliberation is divine. The basis of the state of one who is devoid of this virtue and is bereft of this blessing is weakened; great confusion arises in his kingdom and such cracks occur in his sovereignty as can not be repaired for a hundred years. In pleasures and blood-sheding and in matters pertaining to wealth and property of the people, orders of the king are final and dominant and none of the creatures has the power to avert and delay the same. If in such matters they (kings) do not maintain repose of mind, dignity and sense of responsibility, and loosen the reins of their command in haste, it is very much possible that such a command would suffer from flaws and faults. In such a case the oppressor would succeed and the oppressed one would be vexed and subduded. This would excite horror and hatred

in the minds of all, nobles and plebians, and trust and confidence would disappear from theif heart. The friends would become wary and cautious an would avoid and abstain from him and the enemies would become bold and presumptuous and would bide their time and opportunity. The harm of all this would penetrate into big and important matters and the feeling of awe and dread, and respect for dignity and majesty would disappear. Verses (Arabic) :-"If you want to become a leader of any people at some time, you should do your things with circumspection and forbearance, rather than with haste and severity (violence). People will not advance and turn towards you unless they are made to understand and agree to about the outcome of the move."

The ancient doctors have written in their books of counsels and admonitions that it behaves the high officers of the state and those who are at the helm of power and authority to desist from enforcing orders issued at the time their temper is high and when they are filled with rage for in such a condition there is a greater likelihood of one being overpowered by one's vanity, passions and partiality instead of being guided by reasons and cool-mindedness. They should deem it a perfection of knowledge and wisdom to avoid and abstrain from all such occasions as lead to false accusations. And if expediency and political necessity demand some action they should issue their orders regarding men of God in such a way that when the emergent situation and the need of severe measures end, the time of passionate anger is over, the spirit of acquisence stirs the heart, efforts should be made to wash off the troubles and provide remedy and compensation. Human efforts must not fall short in achieving this. They (wise ones) have not suggested till now any exchange for the precious pearls of life and any substitution for the exquisite gem of the soul. Hemistich : Do not take away a thing which you can not return.

Before considering one more passage in this connection in which, alongwith the conception of kingship and its attributes, responsibilities and functions, a new note has been struck regarding the position of women in respect of men in the state. It is worth while to note very briefly what one finds about Mulk Ārai, the main heroine of the story. This Chinese princes was taken captive as a child and was bred, brought up, and educatad in Sarandip of which she became the queen, the ruler having had no issue of his own. She was so highly accomplished and distinguished among her contemporaries for her character and talents and piety and many other virtues that she was chosen as the best fitted to occupy the throne. A short relevant extract will do. Verses (Arabic) :—"If other

women would have been like her a woman would have had preference over a man". Although the divine order had recorded her in the register of men yet by reasons of the assemblage of many-sided and countless virtues, she surpassed men of perfect wisdom. In the field of knowledge and in the race of sagacity and wisdom she carried off the polo ball with success and excelled men like Asaf (solomen) as those of Aristotellian intellect in wisdom and sound judgement. She placed her steps of pre-eminence forward and under the shade of her Maqna[28] (veil) and her clean skirt (Daman) she kept and controlled chiefs and the rulers by preserving and possessing noble and fine qualities of chastity, purity, rectitude, piety, extreme love of faith, and excess of abstinence. In all these ways and habits, she became the second Rabia Basri. This couplet applied to her in an eminent degree, "I am such a woman that every work of mine is good, proper and admirabe. Beneath my Maqna are the crowns of kings. Behind the curtain of my chastity and purity, which is my fort and place of refuge, it is difficult even for a traveller like the breeze to look into and to get excess to.

It is this newly-wedded queen of Sarandip and the prince of Kalyan who have been described as holding a Darbar in the company of their wazirs. The notables and the grandees of the kingdom had been summoned to have the announcement of the transfer of the crown from the wife to the husband. The following address has been put into the mouth of Mulk Ārai. "It is known to the world, and is a fact admitted on all hands that the Bestower of royal crown and the great giver of the throne of sovereignty, the great and glorious God, may His blessings increase—has, by His wise dispensation brought forth exalted kings in this wide world so that the garden of faith and kingdom may become fully saturated with the water of their swords and in order that by the light of their illuminating opinion, the darkness of tyranny and oppression may be despelled from the horizon of the world, and all the subjects, big ones, and commonalty, may lead carefree, happy and prosperous lives, and the oppressed complainants should be made safe and secure from violence and injustice of tyrannical people. It is also a known fact that the above mentioned significations (Mana or attributes) can not apply and are not possible except in the case of those who possess perfection of equity and justice and are endowed with plenty of wisdom, discernment and foresight. Enough of wisdom and learning do not find place or take shape except in the male members of the humanity. This is because

28. The brides Veil of fine, transparent, rich Muṣlin worn over the head and reaching to the ground.

superiority[29] of male over female is well proved by the Quranic verse "Men are guides and leaders of women" and according to the saying "they are of faulty wisdom", their defective intellect and lack of descernment of women is also not a hidden thing. If such is the condition it would be difficult for me to acquit myself creditably in my guardianship of the intricate affairs of the kingdom and in discharging the duties regarding matters, religious and secular, and managing and administering the transactions of the different classes of the creatures of God. I can not bring to the successful end all the affairs that I have begun to deal with. Without any rhyme or reason it is not permissible for me to divest myself of such responsible works as I have on hands. There is no alternative before me except to offer my submission to Kishwargir and fulfil all the ceremonies and conditions before my wiser counterpart, who is the prodigy of wisdom and descernment. Verse :—Who has seen a real helper and friend in this world ? For every man there is a particular work and for every specific work there is a particular man. The royal crown fits the head of one whose adornement is through the stirning splendour of his sword and not through the bright pearls of the cloud water. He alone can occupy the throne of sovereignty who has the helmet on his head and the coat of mail on his breast, each joined with the other like long locks of hair on his person, and who under the shadow of his long lance sips the blood of his enemy from the goblet of his skull instead of the seasoned wine from the bowl.

IV

There is another feature of the book before us which arrests one's attention and that is the life of mirth and amusements that it depicts and the description of musical soirees and musical instruments that it gives. We should not dismiss all that it has as mere verbal imageries having no relation to reality of reflection of the actual. A social history of Mediaeval India is yet to be written and we have to search for all possible sources and contemporary documentary evidences to get from them what ever may be relevant to the subject. We can supplement our imperfect knowledge of the fascinating subject of social life and conditions, cultural institutions, and performances, in the early period of Muslim rule

29. Minhaj Siraj describes Sultana Razia as a great sovereign. "She was endowed with all the admirable attributes and qualifications necessary for kings but as she did not attain the destiny in her creation of being computed among men, of what advantage were all these excellent qualifications unto her". Iltutmish may have been influenced by Iranian traditions, not in keeping with those of Islam, which disfavours women's supreme position in the state and government and doubts their competence for sound advice and suggestions on Crucial questions.

in India, gathered from, and based on, the fragmentary and incidental information and allusions to contemporary men and events, manners and habits etc., found in the chronicles of the period, by what can be gleaned from such non-historical persian literature as hagiology and Belles lettress. As regards the last, books like Amir Khusraw's Masnavi, and his voluminous work, Ijaz-i-Khusrawi[30], are comparatively more important and dependable than the works of fables and fictions. But Ikhtisān's Basātin-ul-Uns, despite all that is fantastic and fictional in it and its highly flown language and style, has something to commend itself to us. It would suffice to draw the reader's attention to those passages which throw some light on that trinity of joy, wine, woman and songs, which the purists and the legists looked down upon. But all these exhortations and admonitions went in vein for the upper and the middle classes did not avoid them and refused to deny them the pleasures of the forbidden three. There is enough in Basātin-ul-Uns about love-themes, wine bibbing and indulgence in vocal and instrumental music.

In a few sentences on folio 124 the auther has made mention of all these three sources of enjoyment. Says he "In the place where the delicate-bodied cup bearers wearing garments of thin water coloured (transparent) clothes offered the pure wine of pleasures and cheerfulness from the blood of the long-necked flask and made them bleed (intoxicated) on account of the nocturnal attack of the glass-coloured sky, the hard-hearted beastly people sipped with their mouth (lips) wine-coloured blood from the goblet of heart of the delicate-limbed charming women. In places where the Venus-tuned minstrels supplied the food of natural moisture to the sorrowful brains of the love-sick crazy people through the dry veins (strings) of their harp (chang) the grief-dispelling lion-like lovers caused fresh blood to come out of the veins of women with silvery bosoms by their milky claws (shiri chung) and made them drop on the dry ground. (folio 124).

This description of night revelry in which dead-drunk soldiers misbehaved towards weak lovely songstresses in festive assemblies hints at an abnormal situation. Though our author refers very often to the "heart-alluring delicate-limbed cup bearers", to "drinking goblets exciting mirth and joy", and to "the pleasures of listening to the melodic notes of musical organs", he is conscious of the evil effects arising from too much fondness for the same and of the harmful results of excessive indulgence in the forbidden pleasures, specially in the case of those who preside over

30 Matters of Cultural interest gleaned from this difficult work form the subject of separate papers.

the destinies of the people. On folio 109, referring to the evil ways of the king of Kannauj he dilates on the bad consequences of excessive addiction to wine and its concomitants, women and music.

But Ikhtisān was not a puritan nor that type of sufi who condemn or allow restrictive music and lay down conditions of time, place, contents, instruments, and women. We get nowhere any violent diatribe against music. On the contrary we find Ikhtisān to be thoroughly conversant with the intricacies and niceties of secular music and musical instruments in use in his time and he appears to have liked the soothing effects of music. There is enough in his book to show that musical entertainment was much in vogue among the higher classes and on special occasions parties of expert musicians, and skilful performers, and noted instrumentalists were called upon to display their talents. They played upon chung, Nai, Duff, Rabab, Kamacha, and other instruments. Ikhtisān has in his own inimatable way with literary flourishes, described the instruments, their shape, colour, utility and functions etc. Besides the musical instruments which are mostly of foriegn origin we find mention being made of musical notes or melodies, which also appear to have been foreign[31] rather than Indian. A careful study of the description of the various instruments will show what shape they possessed, how they were played, of what materials they were made, and what effects they produced. Amir Khusraw in Ijar-i-Khusrawi has devoted a section to music and in his Masnavis such as Nuhsiphar, Qirān-us-Saddain, Ishqia, he tells us much about musical notes, musical instruments, and also the musicians and the minstrels. But he does not give such graphic description of Rabab, Chung, Tamboor, Nai, Nafier, Shahnayee, Barbat, Kus, Tabal, Dohal, Buq, Karnai, Tas, Jaljil, etc. which he has mentioned in his own highly ornate style.

V

It is worth while to consider a few relevant extracts and attempt a phrased and literal translation thereof. Kishwarigir's father summoned a convivial assembly to get a relief from the strains caused by the transactions of serious business of government and administrations. "In this festive assembly resembling the garden of Aden the venus-tongued musicians made the dwellers of the emerald-like Azure dome of the sky listen with raptures to the sweet and heart-ravishing songs (Nawa) and

31. Musical airs or melodies such as Ushshāq, Bu Salik, Baseet, Parda-i-Zanbur, Juft Sāz, Subz-dar-Subz, Tiriye-i-Rāst, Rehāvi Nawā, and those conceived according to the idea of locality such as Nehāwand, Bākharz, Khorāsān, Irāq, Hejāz, Sifahān etc.

excited the feeling of admiration and joy in the heart of the ascetics of the hermitage of the space. Verses : the minstrel took away the heart and also infused life by his David-like[32] melodies. He did much plundering and availing himself of the screen (Pardah or melodious notes), he tore ascunder the clock of the patience of lovers. His fingers playing on the harp (chung) skilfully handled the chords (Autār) of the instruments just like the rope-dancers (Gada Chāzian)[33] who display their feats on the ropes, and by his soul-stirring musical tunes or melodies (Pardah) brought under his control (kept spell bound) the listeners and spilt their blood on the ground like the vein opener (Fassād) by his magical strokes on the strings of the harp. The chung being all attention and standing on one leg at the post of its duty sounded the "Khusrawani" (highly melodious) tones through hundreds of tongues and conveyed sweet tidings of an everlasting life to fascinated ears through its melodious voice. You might say that due to extreme emaciation the dried veins have made their appearance on the skin of the silvery white body of a Turk from Khata or that it is a zāal (grey heired descrepit person), bent[34] with the age and weekness like bow of Rustam whose lean and thin body has nothing but skin and bones. There was something in its form which had the somblance of the eye-brows and the drooping eye-lashes of a very old man having the appearance of a rainbow presaging the dropping of the rain water from the cloud. Although the instrument (chung) suffers and undergoes many violent blows from the finger-strokes nothing out of tune ever comes out of it, nor does it ever raise its head above like those who are shy and bashful.

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32. The greatest praise that could be paid to an Arab musician was to liken his performance to that of the Bibblical Prophet, David "Mazāmir-ud-Dāud" or "Lahn-i-Dāudi" meant "as melodious as the Psalms of David". The warblings of birds were considered music par excellence because, according to a reference in the Quran a bird was the companion of Prophet David in singing the praises of Allah.

33. It is not known why what is termed 'Rasan-bāz' in Persian is so called here. Perhaps the old retired warriors who were in a state of utter destitution earned livings by displaying their feats on ropes. It is also translated as "Wager of religious warfare.

34. The Pahlavi and Persian name of the Harp with an upper sound-chest was chang, a term which meant "Bent or Crooked". It was the most important instrument of Music in Sassanian times and was given a prominent place in festive scenes. It was the in strument with the famous minstrel, Nikisa, who played at the Court of Khusraw Parwez (G. farmer in J. R. A. S. 1938, P. 4 & 5). It was a three-cornered or triangular bow-shaped many-stringed instrument with nails or pins on the arms or post. Its long curved neck projected upward from the body. The strings

Description of the Rabab (Violin or Rebec)

The mirth-exciting, pleasure-giving Rabab keeping its chord (rag) straight for fear of the finger-strokes (plectrum), of the musician remains engulfed in his arm like a lovely, delicate-bodied beloved locked up in the arms [35] of her lover. Its body has become dry as wood owing to constant rubbing and pulling (Goshmāl) and on account of the shock of wounds caused by the dagger-like arrow point (painful strokes of the plectrum) the bones of its body has become uncovered (visible). It is a peculiar treasure-keeper whose valuables are exposed and made accessible to the robbers and are yet safe and immune from wrongful possession and plunder. It is an astonishing 'Ud' [36] (lute) which enkindles the fire in the heart of the lovers and brings forth smoke out of the chest of those who have lost their heart, (Bedilām). But its hand is fixed securely on the chords (Rishtaha) because of its habit of carrying off the very valuable souls of men (Naqde-i-Jahān), and on account of the charge of spiling blood its body has been drawn in a raw hide. Despite its possession of so much treasure it is destined to retain a long life but an empty stromach and it remains always in a begging posture with bowls in hands like a begger or the mean low persons before people of high lineage. It brings out a streams of tears from the eyes of the people by its contrivances of triangular thorns (Taradduddāt-i-Khasakash) and its delicate wires (strings) having opened out the subtleties of musical notes and the melodic modes of "Sabz ander Sabz"[37] serves as a cure for the lower portion of the hectic sapling (heart) and infuses and brings back new life and health to T. B. patient. You could say that straight lines have been drawn on the surface of the chinese papers or the yarns of silk from Khata have been arranged for the garments of fine texture (Nasij), brocade of cloth of gold (Zebā) and of silk (Harir).

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running from the neck down wards were struck by the fingers of the left hand without a plectrum (Zakhma or Mizrāb).

35. An old handsome, long-necked, globular-chested, bowed-instrument, made of wood with a belly of parchment. It had gut strings, tuning-pegs and a gourd and was played with a bow or plectrum. Ibn-i-Batuta described it as of "gut and gourd" type. It was held on the lap or against the bosom by the player. It emitted pathetic plaintive tunes.

36. A wooden bellied instrument made of wood with the exception of the lower portion of the body which was covered with skin. The depth was about half of the breadth which was the beating place of the strings.

37. The name of th 9th musical notes of Bārbad, the famous Persian musician who was a native of Janrām and a contemporary of Khusraw Parwez.

Description of Kamacha (Bowed-viol)

As regards the bowed-viol,[38] by sending forth the heart piercing sound so its bow-shots arrows (Teri-i-ras)[39] into the hearts of the lovers (musical notes) it tore asunder the delicate seven screens (pardaha or musical notes) of Barbad and Nakisa, sometimes it brought forth vehement groans and lamentations like those of Farhād due to the pangs of separation from Shirin, and sometimes it caused deep and mournful sighs to be heaved like those of Majnu in his sorrowful yearning for Lailā. The form of the bow resembled the boat-shaped new moon, you would say that the figure of the bow looked like an upturned small canoe on the surface of the circular tank, or that the game-ball[40] falling from the hands of the players is lying reversed on the silvery polo ground in the midst of the play. The highest string of the bow below (Zir) is stiff and straight like the arrows fixed up and joined with the bow strings, and being continuously hit and pulled, the bow string brought out low tunes and produced a peculiar sound like that of 'Toghana' arrows for the ears of the listeners. It is a queer kind of a bow that the arrows which are shot through it are always found in their place like the bosom of the boat (Bare-i-Kishti) or like an unfortunate person (Bargashte) while it (bow itself) is always moving; and it is a peculiar arrow which hits unerringly at the hearts of the persons addicted to pleasure without the help of its feather and point. Verses :—There are two persons like two intoxicated beings; one is crooked and the other is short-statured. The beautiful beloved is holding both of them like the sun and the moon on the lap (the bow shaped crescent and the sun in the hand).

Description of Nai (Flute)

And the pleasure-enhancing flute (Nai) was emitting David-like (pleasing) high tunes from its tongueless mouth, and a new life appeared

38. The Kamācha, a Persian diminutive of Kamān, or bow, was a bowed and stringed instrument with a hemispherical sound chest. Its body was a gourd with a hole behind it. It was played with a bow like that of a Violin. The Turkish poet, Rawāni (D. 532-25) speaks of the "bandit viol armed with shafts and bow" and having a foot. The Kamāncha has been described as a cousin of Rabāb.

39. 'Tiriye Rast' was a note in music. The term 'Tir-i-Ras' also means a bowshot.

40. The good old game of Chaugān, so much favourite to the Turks, was played by mounted horseman, each armed with a long stick and divided in to two parties, the object of the rivals being either to carry off the ball from the adverse party, or force it over a certain boundary line.

to glitter (was infused) in the bodies of the people, on account of its kindness or affection. Its body is factured with the marks of injury inflicted by the plectrums (Zakhmaha) like that of war-experienced brave warriors, and its mouth remains always empty like the long surviving aged people who are devoid of the sense of humanity. What a peculiar[41] shape has it got ? The mouth is at its head (top) and its eyes are inside its stomach. How straingt is its head ? Its articulation or utterance pacifies or removes the feelings of sufferings, pain and grief. It is full of eyes (holes) but is devoid of seeing pupils, and everyone of its eyes emits melodious tone a thousand time more than the song of the nightingle.

Description of Duff (Small Tambourine)

The tambourine sends forth noisy uproar and cries for help because of the pain suffered by the slaps[42] it has had at the hands of the musician. It is also weeping aloud because of the beating received from the hands of the minstrel. It is such a sun-infused (heat-filed) instrument that it keeps warm the pleasure-seeking audience with the sorrow-dissipating heat of its inner body. Its novel and pleasing sounds of bells (Jalajil) [43] causes the patient prosaic ones to feel thrilled and start beating their legs (in dancing). It tries to overcome the musician himself even if it gets hundred strokes at his hands. And it is never out of tune (is unmanagable) even when it suffers slaps on its face.

Elsewhere on folio 165 we get a more succinct description of the same musical instruments the relevant passage is as follows :—

41. An instrument of the "wood-wind" family, reed-pipe or flute, called Mizmār by the Arabs and Nai by the Persians in which the sound was produced by means of the vibrations of the single or double reed held in the player's mouth. It was a hollow tube with a number of small holes through which it was blown., The flute-like 'Nai' came to be known as 'Nai abyaz' or 'sufaid' (white) to distinguish it from the oboe-like Nai which was called 'Nai-aswad' or 'Nai Siyāh' (black). The Oboe was an instrument of orchestra with 7 holes in front and 2 holes behind and a brass bodkin attached with it.

42. A very old instrument of vibrating membrane family which was considered even in the days of the Arabian Prophet lawful or legally permissible. At all public and private festivities minstrels and songstresses (Qainas) regaled the audience by singing the joyous lays to the beatings of the square, rectangular, or round tambourine with metal plates. Ud, Chang, Rabāb, Nai, Duff, Tambur, Qānun, formed the main parts of the orchestra in early mediaeval times.

43. The Jalājil and Ajrās were bells, the former being usually small hemispherical grelots or globular clinkets while the latter were large conoid or square bells. The Jalājil is to be distinguished from Qalāqil which made jingling sounds. These bells were hung on animal, camels and mules.

A party of sweet-tongued minstrels was presented before Kishwargir and his newly-wedded wife, Mulk Ārai, queen of Sarandip. The minstrels began to play on their musical instruments. The harp was like an old man with doubly bent back. On account of extreme emaciation veins had come out of the skin, and of its body there remained nothing but bone and skin. The wailings of melancholy tunes came out from it on account of the shame of its fine tones of Jufta Saaz[44] the venus of the sky crept into oblivion, and forgot its mirthsparkling melody. What a curious form is this of chang ? The head is stooping like that of a civil reverential bashful person and its leg is stretching like an idiot. Although it complained much (Pairāhani-Kāghzi Poshida) of the strokes of the opressor inflicted by the left-handed harpist through its hundred of tongues, no body responded and tapped it on its back and head with the hand of justice and fairness. The more the harpist showed grace and skill in waylaying people, the greater was his fame and appreciation and admiration of the audience.

As regards the Nai or lute, it is like a conjuror which by its incantation and blowing puffs made a dry wood vocal. You might say that by its perfect necromancy or enchantment it had been holding a black cobra in its mouth, or that a stream of pitch (Tār)[45] had been coming out of its throat. What a curious creature is this Nai ? It will not speak out as long as it has not been beheaded,[46] and it can not utter a word till drops of water are poured in its throat. The traditional sweet tongue and the hand (fingers) which caused fresh songs to come out from the gut of the bow stream added to the mirth and pleasures (of the assembly). The beating of the dry veins and the strokes of the bow (Zakhma + plectrum) which was like the point of the surgeon's knifes brought forth watery forms from the stream-like eyes of the men of worth and sanctity.

As for the Duff (small Tambourine) although it was frequently slapped by the instrumentalists such drubbing did not make it deviate from the circle of sincerity (remained sound as before), and on no account did it let fall the curtain (Pardaha or musical note) on the main business. Never did it come out of its skin or was it ever out of hand.

The bow or spectrum (Kamān) of the viol (Kamancha), by every sweep of its well-tuned arrows struck at the heart of the grief-stricken

44. One of the kinds of music.

45. The term also meant a wire, the string of the musical instrument, a note in music.

46. The performers can still be seen doing them two things to keep their instruments going.

lovers. The Kamancha cried out and complained against its association with it (bow) just as the heart-alluring delicate-bodied lovely women lament the company of humpbacked aged ones, and like the jocose conversationalists of upright conduct, it raised clamour and tumult at the crowding in of crooked ill-natured ones. The mild corners of the string (Raud)[47] wondering at the assemblege of so many articles of rejoicings smiled (Dandān sufaid Kard) and the gourd (Kaddu) which was devoid of wine made the facetious partners of the assembly intoxicated, and by one string (Raud) it made two streams of string, flow from their eyes.

On folio 47-48 we get an account of festive assembly held on the occasion of the marriage of the wazir's son with the daughter of the Zāhid. The sweet-tongued minstrels sent forth the melodies of 'Raud' and " Sarod "[48] to the circular firmament. By listening to the soul-refreshing tunes the venus of the sky began to rotate on (beat) its legs on the roof of the heaven, and being astounded at the sight, stopped from moving. The gantle aroma of zephyr made the sensorial souls of the heavenly angels fragrant and the smoke of saffron, ambergris, the sweet-scented aloes of Khemr (Ud-i-Qimāri) and Musk gave the garb of enternal life to, and covered the body of, the captive and the ruined ones of this dusty earth.

The chang (harp), full of bow strings or ringlet of hair-locks drawing up its legs, threw up the halter or noose like Rustam son of Zaal (captured the hearts of the valient ones) by its side locks. The striker or spectrum at the time of touching the second and the third strings of the harp played like the rope-dancer on the rope. The gentle-handed harpist, by modulating the fresh "Tarana"[49] of "Parda-i-Ras"[50] gave stabilising strength to, and disclosed the natural disposition of, the love-stricken ones, whose sorrows had been sapping the vitality of their body. By its comfort-affording tunes it gave brightness of youth to hundred years old men who like the broken "Chang" had been lying neglected and useless. Their garment of youth had been torn into pieces. This chang had increased the warmth (enthusiasm) of the assembly thousand fold

47. Rod or Rud was the gut or sinew used as a bow-string.
48. Song or melody, or modulation.
49. Modulation, harmony, song, melody, a kind of song ascribed to Amir Khusraw.
50. The Persians distributed their musical notes or tunes into primary and secondary ones. Like the Hindus they spoke of 7 harmonic sounds and 12 Maqamats or Pardahs. These had 'Shoabs' and 'Goshas'. The Hindu 'Svaras' or soor or sounds were analogous to the Persian notes or Pardahs. One such mode was Pard-i-Rāst (direct).

through the heat of (high spirits) of the lovers and it had enkindled the fire of love in the heart of the lover-stricken ones.

From the other side of the curtain[51] the bow-shaped harp emitting the note of Bākharz shot liver-piercing arrows at the heart of intoxicated lovers. It drew forth from the eyes of the audience, the river Dajla or Tigres of Bughdad and Iraq with the help of fine melodious notes of "Basit" (Iraqian note repeated 8 times) whosoever listened to the Safahani notes through the throats of the "Nai" wished to apply the dust of the feet of the singer to the eyes like the collyrium of Isfahan. Whosoever listened to the note of "Nehawand" in full sense became, on account of excessive senselessness, noted and notorious in the world. Those who listened to the notes of "Hejaz" became so ecstatic that instead of proceeding on the road to Hejaz betook themselves to forests. As a result of listening to "Busalik"[52] notes streams of bloody tears flowed from the eyes of the stony hearted hard souls. The wisdom-ravishing delicate notes of "Rehavi" led astray the early risers of the hermitage. The heart-pleasing divergent "Zar-o-Bam (high and low notes) created spiritual harmony between the body and the soul.

The description of a female singer named Māh Paikar also deserves a passing-notice. Describing a musical soiree held in a "Majlis-i-Uns", Ikhtisān writes, "In the meantime there appeared a female musician named Māh Paikar (Moonbodied) whose moon-like face surpassed or dimmed the beauty of a full-moon. She continuously wounded and tore asunder the heart of the recluses and the ascetics which served as the target for the arrows of the flame darted from the bow of her eye-brows which were so will-knit. Verses (Arabic) :—"If she had lived in the age of (prophet) Yusuf (Joseph), the heart of men would have been cut to pieces[53] and not the palms of women". This is followed by some persian verses, with literary flourishes. Our author has given exaggerated and eulogistic descriptions of her arched eye-brow, chin, cheek, eyes, face, neck, shoulders etc. Then we are told, "She cleared the dust of sadness and melancholy and removed the pangs of separation from the heart.

51. This is interesting for till modern times respectable Omaras used to keep some kind of screen between the party of the minstrels and the chosen few of the audience. Perhaps they were conscious of the impropriety of indulging openly in a pastime which was not very praisworthy.

52. Such musical notes or tunes as Bu Salik, Baseet, Rehāvi, Tarana, Ushshaw, etc. which, according to popular tradition Amir Khusraw invented, were in fact very old musical melodies.

53. Vide Sura-i-Yusuf in the Qurān.

She appeared for the purpose of beating her legs (i. e. dancing) before the wisdom-employing Khusraw (king) with thousands of embellishments.

When the king saw her so beautifully decorated and decked out he said, Verses:-"Will you swear solemnly by your face which gives solace to the souls of a world of men and say as to who has decorated and embellished you so exquisitely. I have seen so many specimens of charming and lovely beings, but I have never seen nor heared a person of such bewitiching beauty and embellishment as you are. She replied, "Oh lord of the capped grandees. A painter has come here from Sarandip who claims superiority in the art of painting and portraiture over the Chinese expert artists......When his pen is at work in painting Azar[54] gives up his sense of honour and emulation, and when he is busy with his brush and colour he throws Mani[55] into the river of wonderment. His pictures and portraitures are so life like that those who look at them take them to be real animals and men......What you see is the result of the subtle skill of the same master artist.

On folio 55, Ikhtisān has given a graphic description of the 'Saqi' (cup-bearer) and wine bibbing activities of the night revellers. We are told about the enchanting beauty of the rozy-cheeked cup-bearer who by her appearance in an open space within the festive assembly which looked like a garden of tulips eclipsed the sun and threw the moon into the shade. We also find something about the sparkling scarlet-coloured wine which was poured into the sun-shaped silvery goblets and crystal wine-cups. The delicious and joy-infusing wine gave a filip to the activities of the merry-makers......"This is a curious kind of fire (wine) which in its effects works like the water of life" and it is a curious kind of water that lends colour of fire to the cheek of the drinkers. The soul nourishing aroma made the intellect intoxicated even before the cup was placed on the palm of the hand and it soon became empty like the tulip. The rose coloured wine was dressed in scarlet garments and resembled the blood-shot eyes of the lovers.

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54. The name of the father of Prophet Abraham who is said to have been a good sculptor.

55. The name of the celebrated Persian painter who became the founder of the sect of the Manicheans.